

Meeting with Auto Dealer Association
August 19, 2004

DECORATIVE BANNER PROGRAM (banners on light poles)

Previous Banner Program

Previous program allowed banners between 8 – 16 sq. ft. Each banner was limited to one common "Shop Sunnyvale" message. Banners were placed 9 ft. above the ground and every 30 ft. along the street frontage. This program is limited to lightpoles along the street only, and does not address interior light poles. That will be handled separately through the Auto Dealer Sign Issue.

Questions/Suggestions

1. The association has a common logo/name: Sunnyvale Auto Row. Banners should contain both this logo and individual business logos and/or names.
2. Can banners be 20 sq. ft.?
3. Can banners be placed on every existing light pole, not just every 30 ft?
4. Can banner heights be lowered to 7 or 8 ft?
5. Can two banners be placed on each pole? One with the common + individual log and one for special events?
6. Don't require the association to change the banners every 6 months.

Action Items

- A. The association will have the advertising company to draft some banner designs.
- B. The City will look into minimum banner heights above the sidewalk.
- C. The City will review all above suggestions and email the association with some final thoughts/comments and discussion regarding our recommendation.

Time Line:

- Planning Commission will hear this item on **9/13/04** (you are all encouraged to attend).
- City Council will hear this item on **9/27/04** (you are all encouraged to attend).

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Permanent and Temporary Signs (Overall Sign Code)

Needs

1. There are special events that happen during the week, and not just on weekends.
2. Special events may last longer than 30 days.
3. Each dealership has several different "businesses", including
 - New Auto Sales
 - Used Auto Sales
 - Service
 - Parts
 - Sub-brands (i.e. Scion)
4. Directional signs are critical in guiding customers to each of these different areas.

Concerns with Current Regulations

1. Sign code is too restrictive and overall visibility of auto dealerships in Sunnyvale is not competitive with other auto rows in the Bay Area.
2. Temporary sign ordinance is too restrictive in details (balloon size, numbers, etc.) and duration (only 30 days).
3. Directional signs are too short to see. If they are raised they interfere with visibility of main ground sign which is limited to 10 ft.

Suggestions

1. Remove the word "Sunnyvale" from wall sign calculations.
2. Allow banners on all interior light poles.
3. Allow additional signs for additional services.
4. Allow 35-40 ft. ground signs.
5. Have quarterly permits for all temporary signage at a dealership, including cold air balloons, banners, etc. rather than monthly permits.
6. Allow upgrades (painting, cladding) to existing non-conforming ground signs.
7. Allow larger temporary signs and cold air balloons and more often.

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Action Items

- A. The City will review these suggestions and return to the association at a regular meeting with some concrete alternatives for further feedback.

Meeting with Interested Residents and Businesses on Page 4 of 7
Revisions to the Sunnyvale Sign Code
January 21, 2005

Attending

4 residents
5 auto dealer representatives
1 sign company representative
1 representative from the Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce
1 large retail developer

Permanent Signs

Staff reviewed the draft recommendation and answered several questions on the origin of this study. There was also some discussion between residents and auto dealer representatives in regards to the importance of ground sign size and height for the success of their business.

Staff received these comments:

- A resident believed service quality is more important to customers than sign size.
- Street address numbers are important to traffic safety and helping customers get where they need to go.
- Auto dealer representatives believe that taller and larger ground signs will assist customers in locating the right driveway and being served better.
- We should avoid being bombarded by advertising.
- We should not let corporate sign restrictions dictate the right character for Sunnyvale.
- One auto dealer was concerned that the ground sign size and height was not enough to justify removing a larger nonconforming sign to update it.
- Auto dealers felt directional signs are a safety issue. They have many customers who stop on El Camino Real to try and identify which driveway to pull into.
- Signs are used to show where a business is located vs advertising of the business.
- A resident said she has no problem with the sign height being raised. She felt it was useless to put up a sign if its hidden by parked cars on the street.
- Some residents prefer the logo of the business instead of text.

Meeting with Interested Residents and Businesses on Revisions to the Sunnyvale Sign Code January 21, 2005

Suggestions:

1. Consider not counting logos towards sign area.
2. Research whether there should be a copy height limit for ground signs.
3. Suggest a minimum height and size for street address signs to ensure easy visibility.
4. Consider allowing additional wall sign area if the sign is set back a certain distance from the street.
5. Consider allowing larger "entrance signs" for buildings with entrances not facing El Camino Real.

Temporary Signs

Staff reviewed the draft recommendation and discussed what the current code allows.

Staff received these comments:

- Several residents did not like the appearance of large inflatable objects. One resident was concerned about the amount of balloons and pennants displayed at some dealerships.
- One resident stated that they thought 108 days for display of temporary signage was too much.
- Several auto dealer representatives stated that inflatable objects were not as important to their business as temporary banners that advertised special sales events.
- Several auto dealer representatives discussed how important it was to auto sales to have balloons and other temporary signage that "generates excitement". This was noted as being particularly important on weekends to help compete with Capitol Expressway Auto Mall and Stevens Creek Auto Row.

Suggestions:

1. Consider prohibiting large inflatable objects except in the case of a grand opening.
2. It makes sense to allow more temporary signage, but maybe 12 events per year are too many.
3. Consistent enforcement of temporary signs is crucial towards keeping El Camino Real uncluttered.
4. Auto dealers would like to be able to advertise special sales on banners between their light poles.

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